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The Sign and the Search

BY FREDERICK W. NORWOOD

Of which salvation the prophets have enquired and searched diligently . . . searching what or what manner of time the spirit of Christ which was in them did signify. 1 *Peter* I:10, 11.

I.

IS THERE not there a very suggestive definition of a true Christian? A true Christian is one who is "searching what or what manner of time the spirit of Christ that is in him doth signify."

Is there not there also a significant definition of the true church? Which is the true church? On what are its claims based? The true church is she who is searching what or what manner of time the spirit of Christ which is in her doth signify.

You observe the two emphatic points there. The emphasis is upon searching rather than upon possession, not upon what the church claims, but upon what she yearns for, not upon her authority to say, "This is the way and the only way," but upon her willingness to explore every way, searching what or what manner of time the spirit of Christ which is in her doth signify.

Observe the sudden pre-natal significance which is attributed to Christ by Peter, one of the first of his disciples. Already to him the Christ is eternal. He is speaking of him as the Christ who, by his spirit, had inspired the prophets who were his forerunners. Before Christ or after Christ, B. C. or A. D., as we say, had ceased to be arbitrary. Always the spirit of Christ had been in men, signing to them to follow, to believe, to undersand.

The significant *credo* of those first disciples was not that the son of the carpenter of Nazareth was the long expected Messiah. They did believe that, and such a belief was dramatic but by no means unique. It has happened over and over again that the least

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likely persons in their birth and in their circumstances have proved to be the true kings. It has happened so often that it may be said to be the unexpected thing we expect from God.

Neither was the remarkable thing about their faith, their belief that the influence of Jesus Christ would spread until it covered the whole world and reached on through all ages. They did believe that, but that in itself would have been a mere hypothesis. It could not have been demonstrably true until the whole world had been won for him, and that, none would venture to say has happened even yet.

No, the first belief of the early church was the most difficult belief of all. They believed that they had seen God. It was not merely that Jesus has been blessed of God, inspired by God, chosen by God, but that in some awful sense he was God—manifest in the flesh. What to us would seem the last and most tremendous effort of faith was historically the first and most irresistible dogma. For this their history had specially prepared them. Even then the impact of Jesus must have been quite extraordinary. The first generation had not passed away before they had begun to interpret the life of Jesus and the sayings of Jesus in a supernatural kind of way. They had seen God. They felt that they knew God. They had seen sufficient of his purpose to be able to work in fellowship with him. They had a theory and practice concerning their own lives and the meaning of the world. It is all very remarkable, but it is undeniably historical.

A New Age

No wonder that such a belief brought in a new age. It is the only kind of belief that can bring in a new age. A new age did dawn for the world with the emergence of the belief that God was in Christ. We are not yet outside its orbit; we are still conditioned by its spirit. We must either go back to the same source of inspiration or find another equally valid, and where shall we find it?

What is most deeply wrong with us is that we do not know the meaning of things, the meaning of the world, the meaning of God. We have been accumulating details of knowledge—we have more knowledge than the world ever dreamed of having through all the centuries, but the massing of details of knowledge does not necessarily interpret things, and the world is not interpreted to the man of today. He does not know what it is all about, what he should aim at, what he should work for. That is our real trouble.

It comes to us at a time when all the conditions of life are making us aware of the oneness of things, breaking down our insularities and our barriers, making ludicrous our isolated prejudices, sweeping us up into one great brotherhood, and yet we do not know what it is all about. That is our supreme tragedy.

We shall certainly be driven back upon religion bye and bye. We cannot help ourselves; we cannot hold together without a basic and compelling idea.

I believe we shall still hold together by reinterpreting Christ as the revelation of God, as the sign of the deepest meaning of life.

Someone was telling me the other day about a man who had returned from a visit to the United States. He brought with him, as a present to his children, a jig-saw puzzle. He told them if they could fit the pieces together properly they would constitute a map of the United States. He left them to their task. He was not gone long before he heard their shout of triumph. He was surprised to see that they had done it. He said to them, "I did not know you were so familiar with the map of the United States as all that." And then he saw that the children had discovered something which he had missed. It was that the blocks on their

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hinder side, when put together, set forth the portrait of Abraham Lincoln. Once the children had got that clue they found it easier to arrange the features of Lincoln than the forty-eight states of America.

I am not suggesting that it is as easy as all that. Making the jig-saw puzzle of life, in all its apparent confusion, to take upon itself the portraiture of Jesus Christ is a truly overwhelming task. It is much easier to keep pushing things about according to the mood or the need of the moment, getting pieces together here and there, though appalled by the chaos in between. Living without a plan is definitely easier than living with a plan, except that the confusion is appalling. But living with the plan of causing things to reflect the royal leadership of Jesus is quite obviously living upon a heroic scale.

Now the early disciples felt that they had such a task as that. They conceived it clearly enough and they stumbled, nay, they swept into a new and great

age. And, baffling as things are today, the conviction remains still in our hearts, that we know, or we ought to know, what it is we are after. When we get back that faith, and it becomes dynamic with us, then the church will again recover her position of leadership, she will continue to throw forth prophetic souls, and to inspire the labor of multitudes of people.

II.

It ought to be obvious that so great an objective is beyond our actual reach. It can only inspire our search. When the church presumed to say that the authority of the "sign" was so overwhelming that further search was unnecessary, then the church became radically anti-Christian. The very meaning of a vital Christian faith is that Christ's followers should be forever "searching what, or what manner of time the spirit of Christ that is in them doth signify."

Now this is a very noble word of St. Peter's. It makes one realize what great things must have happened within his heart and mind during those comparatively few years, since in his thinking the Man Jesus had been transmuted into the Eternal Christ. He is asserting that those great prophets who had died long before Jesus had been born had been inspired by the spirit of Christ. In searching after him, aware only of signs and promptings, they had gained insight into his sufferings, and the glory that should follow. Thus they were able, strangely enough, to speak more clearly to those who came after them than to their own contemporaries. The spirit of Christ in men is forever reaching forward. It is the spirit of the Great Quest.

It is one of the outstanding characteristics of the Bible, that many of its earlier passages most strangely anticipate the fulfilments of the New Testament. Think of the fifty-third chapter of Isaiah, for instance, and it is difficult to escape the conviction of a great spiritual unity progressively revealed. Peter is telling you that the spirit of Christ was in the prophets, though they knew it not. On their part there was search; on the part of the spirit there was signification. The spirit made signs, the prophets searched. And the prophets found more than they could appropriate. Theirs was the joy of projecting forward the most glorious results of their searching. That is all very wonderful, and is part of our traditional dogmatic belief, but it is strange how we deny it in practice. In the main, religion tends to look backward rather than forward. We stress the authoritative revelation rather than the search. We speak of the great things of the faith in the past tense rather than in the future tense. The spirit of Christ is a *forward-reaching* spirit.

Why the Church Is Ineffective

Nothing is more baffling, more irritating, than to be constantly referred back to something fixed and immovable in the past in the face of new and challenging things in the present. That has made the church ineffective over and over again, and in the last analysis is lack of courage, lack of faith.

We must be obedient to "the spirit of Christ which is in us" as we face up to the biggest conceivable problems of today, or to the simplest tasks and problems of daily conduct. Our task is to search what or what manner of time the spirit of Christ that is in us doth signify.

Ah, you say then, with a note of disappointment in your voice, is there nothing but search, nothing we can be sure of, nothing we can rest upon?

My friend, the desire to search is the evidence that you have been quickened by Christ. Men do not search for that for which they have no desire, no sense of need. Only when the thing is there in part within their souls or the yearning for it is clearly felt do they really search. The search is part of the sign. There is no sign that Christ came so valid as the search after his fuller coming.

Over and over again men turn away from the sign, the sign of Christ. It seems too obvious to them, it has been there so long they think there must be something new and novel, surely, to meet the needs of the world today. They turn away from the sign, but continue the search and over and over again they are astonished to discover how they have come stumbling back to the place of the sign. You will hear them say, and often as if it were a new discovery, "Nothing but the spirit of Christ can save us."

Is not Christ justifying himself? Is not he the one Figure who cannot be dislodged? Is not he the one dynamic personality whose power never dies away?

Now, go and search. Where? Oh, just in that place upon which your eyes are resting now. Maybe in some obscure set of circumstances, in some problem of conduct, maybe in some big job that you have to do in which many issues are at stake. But be sure of this, that the truest mark of a Christian is that he is one who is searching what, or what manner of time the spirit of Christ which is in him doth signify.

You have seen the sign. Continue the search!

Thy Kingdom Come!

By Thomas C. Darst

Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done, as in heaven, so on earth. Matthew 6:10.

WE HAVE seen the crashing of financial institutions in which we trusted. We have heard the tramp of thousands of our unemployed brothers seeking a chance of live. We have seen the toil of the farmer come to naught, and we have sensed the deep silence of our closed factories and mills. We have had to face stark realities, and some of us, I believe, have made a fresh discovery of God. It has been a time to try men's souls, and I believe we have needed such a time, a testing time, when men, shaken from false security and transient content, fall back upon God and find peace.

The easy days, so sadly abused, so wantonly squandered, are gone, and the very salvation of America may depend upon the length of time they remain

away. The hard days are here—the days of planning and thinking and giving up, the days of readjustment of living and restoration of values and discovery of self. These days are here—may we have the courage to thank God for them; may we have the wisdom to use them, not as valleys of depression through which we toil in bitterness and defeat, but as God's own highways, over which we march in confidence and faith to that larger life of service, that wider field of usefulness that we could have never known if we had not learned the lesson of the hard high road.

At such a time as this, we should pause and take stock of our resources. We should ask ourselves: Have I been living in a fool's paradise? Have I been depending upon temporary, transient resources? Have I anything left upon which to build my life? Such an examination, honestly made, should lead us to a realization of the truth that we have lost nothing that is permanent, nothing that makes for character, nothing that could possibly endure for one moment after the breath leaves our body; and that we still have the possibility of possessing all things that make for the splendor of our manhood and the winning of our souls.

Certain Victory, Through Faith

We still have God. We have our Master, Christ. We have membership in his body, the church. We have our task, and we have the certainty of victory, through faith.

In a financial pamphlet I found these pointed words: "These times test men's courage, and they test faith more than courage. There is such a thing as being foolhardy and calling it courage; but experience shows that our peril is the lack of faith. It would seem as if some social leaders have no faith in America, and some church leaders have no faith in God. A defeatest attitude dominates most enterprises for the wellbeing of society and the advancement of the kingdom of God. We are in retreat. The challenge of the sacrificial has been lost in coping with emergencies. Reductions, curtailments, cuts, discarded programs, abandoned fields, surrender, retreat—these are the prevailing attitudes. Faith has crumpled. Men charged with great programs are panic-stricken. They have lost their nerve. Courage, love, spiritual passion, sacrifice, religious fervor, service, generosity, the sense of immediacy, the sense of opportunity, faith—these are the qualifications for a time like this."

God send us faith! God send us courage to thank him for permitting us to live and labor in such a time as this.

At such a time as this, we take notice of our foundations, we dwell on the glory of our heritage; our minds swing back to the beginnings of this mighty organism, of which we are living members, the church of the Living God.

We see a little band of men and women gathered in an upper room in Jerusalem. We wait with them as they wait for the promised power. We see them going out from that little corner of the world in response to the marching orders of their Master. We see them go without material equipment, without influence or earthly power. We see them in complete and glad surrender to the will of God, in absolute loyalty to Christ, in utter self-forgetfulness, going forth against kingdoms of selfishness and lust and greed and sin, and we see them winning those kingdoms and transforming them into the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ.

We speak of our sufferings, our little self-denials, our inability to maintain our luxuries. God pity us for our pettiness. They thanked God that they were permitted to suffer for his sake, and even in awful flame of martyrdom they lifted their radiant faces to the throne of God and cried out their triumphant death song, "Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth."

At Such a Time!

At such a time as this, God is leading his church back to the meaning of the cross, so that it may learn again the glory of its mission; so that from the lesson of that cross it may march forward with fresh faith and passionate devotion to join forces with that lonely leader, Christ, who has been waiting so long for us to come.

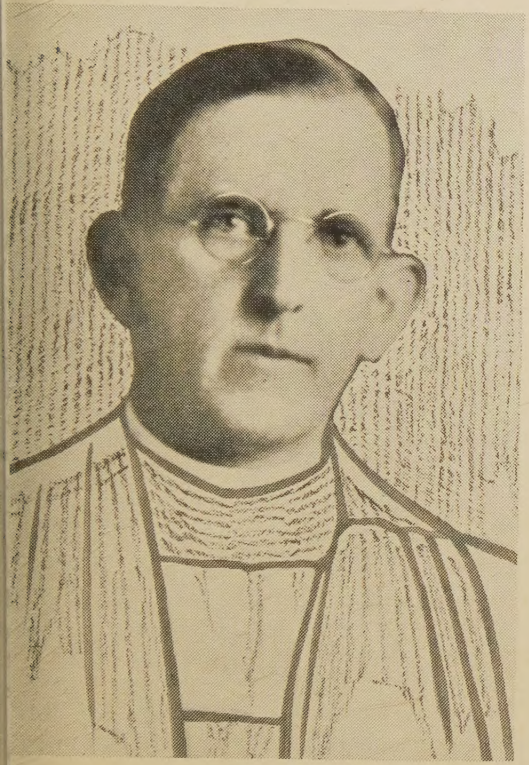
At such a time as this we must take stock of our environment and make a survey of the conditions of our day. It does not require the skill of a keen student of human affairs to realize that conditions in our world are far from normal. Unrest and rebellion characterize a large section of the world; hate and fear permeate human society. China has her revolutions. Russia and her radical experiments are no longer distant disturbing movements to which we give casual, curious attention from time to time. Industrial revolution lifts its head in our own state and nation, and radical influences find their way more and more into the very life of our working people. In a recent article written by my friend, Joseph Fort Newton, he said:

> As the Russian repudiation of religion may help to renew our faith, so the uprooting of humanity in economic and social affairs may force us to put our own house in order. It is not simply a polemic, but a portent, and if it looks at first like the idealism of hell, to ignore it is folly.
>
> It does turn the searchlight on features of our own economic system which are ghastly in their injustice and brutal in their exploitation of man by man. It shows, as in a horrible apocalypse, that our selfish, individualistic commercialism, so ready to use men to make money for private gain and luxurious display, instead of using money to make men, is nothing but organized atheism. It is not only unchristian, it is inhuman.
>
> Surely, we now know that no society has any secure future but that in which the people, all together, learn to cooperate as part of a common life for the common good. Our hope lies in a practical fraternal righteousness, in which the skill of science is employed to serve the masses of mankind. In short, our religion must first do justly, then love mercy, if it is to lead men to walk humbly with God.

We must realize that our house is not in order. With far more than half of the people in this great nation outside of any form of organized religion, with

increasing disregard of law on the part of respect- citizens, with the appalling increase of crime ong youth, with the breaking down of the standard lecency in human relations, we must know that our se is not in order, and that the kingdom of God on h is still an elusive hope.

n our own church, we see the need for a more com- ing faith and finer measure of sacrificial devotion he part of our people. We have held our own. have pushed forward the boundaries of the king- a little bit here and there, but we must admit, in ıe and humility, that we have failed to win any t objectives for Christ and his church. From the



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nt and the sinning, from the forgotten and the ted, from the tenant farmer and the pale chil- f the mill village, the call is coming for our hip, our loving sympathy, our Christlike devo- those for whom he died.

loved me, and he gave himself for me," cried ul out of the fulness of his grateful heart, as, lute surrender, he gave himself to the mighty o which he had been divinely called. The same assurance should send us out today, determined, tever cost, to play our full joyful part in carry- t blessed message to the heart of a weary, wait- rld.

ıe days of our prosperity, we gave, without joy thout sacrifice, to the support of the church and ead of the kingdom of Christ, and because so f us gave without this sense of privilege, the s not sacramental, and, therefore, easily aban- when prosperity ceased. Because our meat was do the will of God, we were hungry, even in sperity and miserable in our poverty.

Admitting our failures, we will not admit defeat; conscious of our poverty of soul, we will not refuse to be fed; unworthy of our sonship, we will not give up our heritage. We will, please God, go on from this place with courage and with faith to accomplish the work committed to our hands. We will face the problems of our day with understanding hearts, and give to a perplexed and distressed people that leader- ship which will enable them to find God, and in find- ing him, to find peace.

The Way of the Cross

Surely we can say with a measure of confidence and joy that we have come to the kingdom for such a time as this, a time of danger and opportunity and high privilege, a time for the testing of souls. It is no time for superficialities, no time for surface con- tacts, but it is a time when clergy and laity alike must so deepen their faith and renew their courage that they may be enabled to show men and women that the only way out is the way of the cross. It is not the easy way, but it is the only way; it is not the way the weakling would choose, but it is the way to vic- tory. "Whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world, and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith."

God give us faith to overcome our fears, our preju- dices, and our sins. God give us faith to see and understand his plans. God give us faith to know and appreciate the power that belongs to his sons.

The Worst Thing that Ever Happened to Jesus

BY HARDING W. GAYLORD

I would thou wert cold or hot. Revelation 3:15.

I THINK it is fair to say that Jesus has been the most mistreated, and the worst mistreated, figure in all history. Look at what he deserved—clean, holy, kind, self-giving, courageous. No man has ever merited better of men than he. But look at what has happened to him, both during his life, and since his death. As we consider some of the items concerning him, we find many things unpleasant, many things unfavorable, many things that are bad. What is the worst thing that ever happened to Jesus?

I.

Let us begin by thinking of some of the things that happened to him during his life.

Surely he was not treated very honorably as that life began. The gospel story tells us that he was born in a manger. Maybe that was not a heartless thing at all. The suggestion has been made that the innkeeper would have been glad to provide better accommodations for Joseph and for Mary as the hour of her first childbirth approached, but that he simply was not able it because of the crowded condition of his inn.

of it was plainly and outspokenly against them; this man said they were "hypocrites," play actors, pretenders. So they talked back to him. They said mean things. They tried to get him into logical difficulties. This was not pleasant, especially to one who understood, as he did, that an ugly spirit was behind it. But this was not the worst thing that ever happened to Jesus.

Character Assassins

Another thing they did was to attack his character. They tried to shoot holes in his reputation. "A gluttonous man and a winebibber, a friend of publicans and sinners," they called him. Here was Mary Magdalene among those whom he knew and helped—an unsavory woman of the streets. You can imagine how the tongues of the gossips might have wagged about that intimacy, imputing to him a motive and an interest that he did not have, and linking his name with hers in a manner evilly suggestive. Yes, the poisonous barbs of the character assassins were leveled against Jesus, this "friend of publicans and sinners," and he must have felt their sting and their venom. But that was not the worst thing that ever happened to Jesus.

He had twelve close friends, and of these, three were especial intimates. One of this inner circle was Peter. It was a chilly evening. Jesus had been seized and placed on trial. Peter lingered outside the room where the action was going on, and a servant girl came around and laughed at him.

"You were with Jesus of Nazareth, too," she said.

"I do not know," he answered. "I have no idea what you mean." You know the rest of the incident—how three times, the third time with oaths, Peter denied knowing the man who was his friend. This must have hurt Jesus. A man likes to feel that at least his closest friends will stand by him when he gets into trouble. It was a wretched thing that happened. But it was not the worst thing that ever happened to Jesus.

This was not the end. After the trial before the Jewish high priest, Jesus was led to Pilate. He was scourged. He was ridiculed. He was tortured with a crown of thorns. He was made to carry his cross as he set out for the place where he was to be crucified. He was nailed to that cross, and after a time he died upon it. Was this the worst thing that ever happened to Jesus?

Whether it was or not, it was not the last bad thing that has happened to him. Let us think of just a few things that have occurred in the time since Calvary.

"Is Christ Divided?"

It was only a short while afterwards that some of the trouble began. Paul had gone out and started some Christian churches. One of these was at Corinth. After he had been away from the city for a time, he wrote a letter back to that church. In it, one thing that he strongly urged was "that there be no divisions among you." You see, factionalism had begun. There were four parties in that early Christian church—a Paul party, an Apollos party, a Cephas (or Peter) party, and a Christ party. Paul saw evils in this. "Is

Christ divided?" he vigorously demanded. This early tendency to split up into factions, and divide Jesus, and get into arguments about him, was bad. We all know something of how this tendency has spread and developed. We all know that effects of it are still evident, and that we still suffer from some of them. In the United States there are today over two hundred denominational groups within the Protestant section of Christianity alone. Jesus has been divided and subdivided and defined and argued about.

Two, in the darkness, sought the cross,
But in their blindness found it not;
This way, and that, in dole and loss,
They sought the cross but found it not.

"This way!"—the one insistent cried;
"Nay, this!" the other quick replied;
And each the other's hope denied.

"I tell you, my way is the right!"
"Nay then, you stumbler in the night,
My way alone leads to the light!"

"Perverse!—Go then your own wrong road!"
"I go!—for my road leads to God."
And each his own way brusquely strode.

And up above, upon the Tree,
Christ's wounds broke in fresh agony.

But that was not the worst thing that ever happened to Jesus.

Fundamentalists and Modernists

And then, some few years ago, there appeared a new split or cleavage. Here was one group who were called Fundamentalists. Here was another who were called Modernists. They had different ideas about Jesus. They had different ideas about religion in general. They talked. They wrote. They argued. They were not always polite to each other. One result of this controversy—and one of the most serious—was to make Jesus not a man to be followed, but a strange figure to be discussed. This meant making the religion of Jesus, not a thing to be lived, but a thing to be theorized and fought over. This was bad, wretchedly bad; but it was not the worst thing that ever happened to Jesus.

Now since the days of that controversy—for I think we may call it practically over—two trends of tendencies have been noticeable. One of them has been to get together and go to work. We have recognized that religion means something to do, more than something to talk about. We have tried to find common tasks and common points of agreement, and have tried to quit our squabbling and do constructive work. And this has been very good.

But the second trend or tendency has not been so good. Some people have reached a wrong conclusion and have followed a wrong line of conduct. They have been disgusted, or perhaps made indifferent, by all this argument. They have said: "Well, if people cannot agree any better about religion, we are not interested. There is nothing in it for us. We are broad, anyway; we do not have to be concerned about religion. And as for Jesus, what have we to do with him or he with us? Frankly, we are not interested."

This attitude and this feeling are general. They are not always due to the Fundamentalist-Modernist controversy, but sometimes, at least, they are connected with it.

II.

Well, here we are. We have considered, rather sketchily, some of the bad things that have happened to Jesus since his entrance into the world. Now, think them over and consider — which is the worst?

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It would be natural, I suppose, to point to the crucifixion, with the thought, "Surely nothing worse can happen to a man than to be killed." But is that true, as you think of all that has happened in the years? Listen:

When Jesus came to Golgotha they hanged him on a tree,
They drove great nails through hands and feet, and made a Calvary;
They crowned him with a crown of thorns, red were his wounds and deep,
For those were crude and cruel days, and human flesh was cheap.

When Jesus came to Birmingham, they simply passed him by,
They never hurt a hair of him, they only let him die;
For men had grown more tender, and they would not give him pain,
They only just passed down the street, and left him in the rain.

Still Jesus cried, "Forgive them for they know not what they do,"
And still it rained the winter rain that drenched him through and through;
The crowds went home and left the streets without a soul to see,
And Jesus crouched against a wall and cried for Calvary.

Now you can see what I mean. I mean what Studdert-Kennedy meant in these throbbing, passionate lines. I mean that the worst thing that ever happened to Jesus is not his crucifixion, but the indifference with which he is left alone by a great many people today! Apathy, unconcern, lukewarmness, the idea that Jesus really does not matter—these are what hurt! The pleading words which the writer of Revelation represents the Holy Spirit as speaking to the lukewarm church in Laodicea deserve to be sounded, and need to be sounded today, not simply in our churches but also in every corner and cranny and interest and activity of our modern life—"I would thou wert cold or hot."

Silence that is Deadly

At this point some of you perhaps feel that I am wrong. You are thinking that indifference is not so bad as I maintain. You are thinking that it looks very bad to me because it is the special attitude which looms up most dangerously today to threaten people who have religion and the progress of Jesus at heart. It is a conspicuously bad thing that is happening to Jesus right now, and that makes it seem to us who are now living a good deal worse than it is. Its immediacy gives it overemphasis. Now of course I recognize that situation and that danger. But when we try to look at the matter as objectively and as fairly as we can, we can see, I think, two things about indifference which indicate that it is as bad as I have described it to be.

The first is that indifference means silence. It means no remarks, either for or against. And it is very hard to do business with silence!

Suppose a salesman comes to your door. If you see the good points of his commodity and begin to talk about them, everything goes well. He agrees with what you say and enlarges upon it, and very soon you are signing your name on the dotted line. Or, if you see objections to buying the commodity offered and begin to state them, the situation is not so bad, either. The salesman can answer your objections; he can attack your "sales resistance"; and if he is a good salesman, you will very likely buy. But if you simply say nothing except that you do not want what he has to sell, there is nothing that he can do but move on. You have given him no favorable hints that he can enlarge upon; you have given him no items of objection for his rebuttal. You have given him silence, and thus you have tied his hands—and, more important, you have tied his tongue.

It is much the same way with us who have very much at heart the success of Jesus in the world. We can pick up the interested remarks and comments of people who respond to our words and our efforts. We can answer, at least after a fashion, objections and queries concerning the church and religion and Jesus; and when we can get interest, we can often convince and win. But silence we cannot cope with. We have no equipment for it. We don't know what to do about it. In the presence of it we are beaten. Our hands are tied. The worst thing that ever happened to Jesus is to awaken no response, either favorable or hostile. Indifference hasn't any handle to it—nothing to take hold of.

Emotional Coldness

The second thing that makes indifference seem so bad is the lack of feeling which it implies. It means a sort of mental and emotional apathy, or state of coma. If you can penetrate beneath the silence that settles upon the outside of indifference, you find only bleakness and coldness within. There is no religious interest that you can discover. There is no spark of divine fire that you can find. If you could find one, you would have something to work with. But to blow upon black coals and cold kindlings is only to waste your breath. That is indifference! What can you do?

Well, what can we do about this worst thing that ever happened to Jesus—we who are deeply concerned about it, and want better treatment for him? What shall we do?

I can tell you one thing—we will not quit! I said a while back that we have no equipment with which to combat indifference. All right, we'll get some! That will take brains. It will take effort. It will take hours of concentration and consecration. But we will stay with the task. We owe too much to Jesus, and we are too much concerned for the success of his way, to allow the worst thing that ever happened to him to go on unopposed and unchallenged in our day, and before our very eyes. We will not quit!

Here is another thing that we can do; and by that "we" I mean people who really care. We can brighten and liven up the spark of religious feeling and interest that is in us. We can see to it that the chilling mists of indifference do not dim and squelch it, and thus we can prevent the noisome and contagious blight of apathy from spreading to us. And we can be more eager and aggressive about our religion. We believe in Jesus and in his way. Then can't we believe hard enough so that it will show more plainly and more evidently? We believe in the church, and many of us belong to this one, considering that it represents an organized and intelligent and warmhearted effort to make the way of Jesus succeed. Then we shall give to it the best that we have, in good words, in good deeds, in eager and happy effort; yes, in sacrificial loyalty! I tell you, there is nothing to be ashamed about in believing in Jesus and belonging to his church! These things ought to mean a great deal to us. Let us show that they do.

Perhaps right there is part of the technique we need against this insidious menace of indifference. Perhaps the contagion of our warmth and eagerness and zeal will offset and cancel some of the poisonous chill of

apathy. The power of glowing and consecrated lives to improve and stir other lives has not yet been fully realized. It is worth trying. It is hopeful.

When Jesus came to Birmingham, they simply passed him by,
They never hurt a hair of him, they only let him die;
For men had grown more tender, and they would not give him pain,
They only just passed down the street, and left him in the rain.

Still Jesus cried, "Forgive them for they know not what they do,"
And still it rained the winter rain that drenched him through and through;
The crowds went home and left the streets without a soul to see,
And Jesus crouched against a wall and cried for Calvary.

You can imagine that crouching figure, if you will, tomorrow as you go to your work or go in and out among the downtown stores for your shopping. Jesus, neglected. Jesus, ignored. Jesus, passed by—while the quest for pleasure and the drive for profit and the push for position and place go busily on. Jesus, left alone! The worst thing that ever happened to Jesus!

The real answer to it all is not a whine of discouragement or a wail of despair that such a thing should be. The real answer to it is rather a call to action and a challenge to our supreme effort. Our Jesus must not be left alone! Let all those who really care be quick to take their places at his side!

Not Masters, But Servants

By E. Stanley Jones

But be ye not called rabbi, for one is your Master, even Christ; . . . and call no man your father upon earth, for one is your Father which is in heaven; neither be ye called masters, for one is your Master, even Christ. But he that is greatest among you shall be your servant. Matthew 23:18-12.

JESUS said, in effect: There are three attitudes of spirit that I cannot entrust you with: First, be ye not called teachers; second, be not called fathers; third, be not called leaders; but be ye called servants. Three attitudes I cannot trust you with, but there is a fourth attitude that I can trust you with.

First, I cannot trust you with the attitude of being a teacher because the attitude of the teacher is this—I know and you do not, now listen to me. That is the attitude of self-assertion, and that attitude cannot be Christianized. Teachers are likely to be dogmatic, are used to being obeyed, and therefore it is easy to become dogmatic and cocksure in your attitude as a teacher.

Second, I cannot trust you with the attitude of a father, for fathers are the people of experience—I have been through this and know, and you do not know, now listen to me. The attitude is: Now I have arrived at a certain position and I have a right to reverence and respect because of my years; now listen to me. I cannot trust you with that attitude, for that attitude cannot be Christianized.

Third, I cannot trust you with the attitude of a leader. Now the attitude of the leader is—I lead and you follow. I cannot trust you with that attitude, because it is an attitude of self-assertion. Now our difficulty is that in our educational institutions we are training up leaders all the time. We inoculate the idea into our young people, telling them, "You are going out to be a leader, remember that." And when we were thinking about becoming missionaries, in the west, it was drummed into us that we were going out to be leaders, and in our young people's societies we have what we call leaders' meetings.

A Different Type of Kingdom

If you get a half dozen people together who have all been trained to be leaders, then you have the stage set for a lot of clashes. They say, Well, I have been trained as a leader and I am going to lead and the rest of you can follow. If everyone has been trained in that way, who is going to follow? Then you have strife, difficulty and confusion in your Christian work. This is why we have the struggle for position, place and power in the church and in the ministry, and therefore Christianity instead of providing a brotherhood has provided cliques and confusion.

A minister goes into a church and says, Now I am going to be your leader. You are to follow me. If you do not do this, then look out! This whole attitude is full of self, dressed up in the garb of religion, but still the old self.

Now Jesus said, I cannot trust you with any one of these three attitudes. The only attitude that I can trust you with is the attitude of service. Among the Gentiles the greatest lord it over the rest, but among you it shall not be so. I give you an entirely different type of kingdom. We will not build it upon the old type; in this kingdom the servant becomes the greatest of all. That man is not greatest who has the greatest number of servants, but that man is greatest who serves the largest number of people. The only greatness is greatly giving of self. The deepest principle of Christianity is this, "He that saveth his life shall lose it, but he that loseth it shall find it again." Lose yourself for the sake of others, and lo, you will find yourself again in authority and leadership—because you did not want it, did not strive for it. You can have leadership and the position of a teacher only on the condition that you renounce it and become servants.

What is the secret of Gandhi's power over India? There are two reasons for it: India has always believed in the man, and reverenced the man who could renounce; the man who could turn his back upon the world and renounce everything—that man has always gripped the heart of India. The old ascetic in India

never served. He centered himself on himself. But Christianity came in with a new ideal, that of greatness through service.

Now Gandhi put these two things together and became the meeting place of these two streams: He became the ascetic who served. He was willing to give up, but was willing to give up for the sake of others.

The ideal of ascetism begets the old type of mind. The ideal of service begets the new type of mind. Gandhi sums up the two types, so he appeals to both. Now because Gandhi is the servant of all he rises up in authority over the spirit of India in an amazing way. Not wanting any position of authority he rises to an authority that is far greater than that of any viceroy.

Sun Yet-sen's Influence

I have wondered why China has turned so tremendously toward the figure of Sun Yat-sen. A chair coolie made this explanation of it when Sun came back to Canton from his long exile, the hero of everyone when the revolution was completed: "I was in school with Dr. Sun and here I am just a chair coolie, and now he is the A number 1 in all the land. It is fate. Fate put him up there and put me down here."

But the secret is not that. The secret was that he forgot his own interests in the interests of China. All through the years he had one passion, to give himself to uplift China. And the test came when it seemed that if he stepped down from the presidency China would be united, and he was willing to step down. Now that moment of being willing to step down to unite China made him truly great. The man who is willing to renounce himself for the good of all rises up in authority over all.

It is not strange that Jesus should hold the place he holds in the world. He to the full fulfilled this principle in his death upon the cross, and he rises to power and becomes the leader of the human race because he was willing to give himself most deeply for the human race. It is no secret that religion will hold the control of the future, and that religion will hold the world which is willing to serve most and to become the servant of all.

If communism can serve people more than Christianity, then communism is going to lead. It is the survival of the spiritually fit, those who give themselves most completely to the service of others.

In the long run I believe that Christianity will win over communism. I believe that communism does want to do something for the poor and distressed, but I believe it is doing it in the wrong way. I do not believe you can create a brotherhood out of class war. I do not believe you can use force to create a human brotherhood. I believe that you must not only have a good end but a good method. Christianity will win in the long run because its end is better and its means are better. I grant that our methods seem much slower and more unwieldy than those of the communists. Theirs are more revolutionary and ours are more evolutionary, but in the end I believe the method of Jesus will win. But it will not be by chance, but because we give ourselves more completely to his power and have a better program than communism has.

You and I must recognize who is going to be the servant. I saw on the platform in India two men who had faced the Christian ministry in two different ways. One took the method of looking out for himself and seeing that he received the proper place on committees, proper recognition and authority. He knew how to pull wires and to move situations in his own behalf, and he arrived at a place high up in ecclesiastical au-

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thority. After he got there, however, he was sitting upon an empty throne. When he preached to us we could not hear anything he was saying. We would always recall those methods by which he arrived at that place; they spoke so loud we could not hear what he said.

Beside him sat Sadhu Sundar Singh. Now he had asked for no place of authority, but gave himself for the people and for Christ. And what happened in his life? He had an authority over our spirits that was tremendous. If it was known that Sundar Singh was going to preach somewhere, the whole city rushed to hear him. He had lost himself, and found himself in a place of authority.

There is plenty of room at the top, but it is only by forgetting yourself that you can arrive. You must begin at the bottom, however, and you can only arrive at the top by forgetting yourself.

The Secret of Kagawa

How did Kagawa get his place of authority? He did not get his place because he is more brilliant than others. I sat beside him day after day at Princeton university and never dreamed that he was anything in

particular. He was just a nice, polite Japanese student, but after a while I heard everyone talking Kagawa, Kagawa of Japan, and I found it was the student beside whom I had sat. The doctor told him he had only one lung and gave him about four months to live. He determined to give himself to the poor, the drunkards, thieves and outcasts of Japan. He thought for them, he lived for them, gave himself to them, and before long what was happening? They were turning to him as their only salvation, guide and friend, and he became the labor leader of Japan and wrote the book, "Beyond the Death Line," the story of his own life—for he did not die at the end of the four months, never thought about it, was too busy to die so decided to live!

He was so entangled with other people's needs that he could not disentangle himself, so he decided to live. This book tells how he was living on beyond the death line. More copies of that book were sold than of any other book in Japan. Everybody wanted to read about the man who forgot himself.

A King of Service

Lord Shaftsbury was one of the greatest men England ever produced. He was very brilliant, was going straight into parliament. But he one day looked into the faces of the poor on the streets of London, and that sight haunted him. One night he lay tossing on his bed, trying to decide which way his life should go. Would he go on into parliament, or would he give himself to the poor? All night he lay there, and one by one he pulled up by the roots the darling ambitions of his heart and flung them out. In the morning he belonged to the poor. He refused his career in parliament and gave himself to the poor. He thought for them, gave himself to them. He gained their confidence, and they turned to him as their leader and friend. They had a thieves' conference one day, and no one could enter unless he was a thief. Everyone was examined very carefully to find out if he was a real thief or not. In our day it might be a little difficult to decide! When they were sure everyone was a thief, they closed and locked the door, and sent for Lord Shaftsbury.

They told him why they were thieves, of the terrible economic condition, and how impossible it was for them to earn a livelihood. Did he send for the police and have them all arrested? No, he understood their needs, and put a policeman into their own hearts. He said, if you will follow me I will help you back into a decent life, and hundreds and thousands of these men were reclaimed through his influence.

When Shaftsbury died, all England turned out to do him honor. I suppose no king ever had such a funeral as he had. When the procession moved up the street it was lined by hundreds of thousands of people. Behind the hearse representing a vast crowd were those carrying a banner with these words: "We were hungry and you fed us;" behind them another banner, "We were in prison and you came unto us;" and another group, "We were strangers and you took us in;" and another group, "We were sick and you visited us." All men turned out to do honor to the man who forgot himself—the servant of all became the greatest of all.

There are two ways open before us. We can take it *for* ourselves, or we can take it *on* ourselves. This brings us to the very crux of the whole problem. If you are going to become the servant of all and take it on yourself, then that means self-renunciation. It means you must say, Yes, I surrender that ultimate, that last thing—myself. Then you say, I own nothing, not even myself. Then Christ can take hold of your life. Then he can use you. Which way shall I take? Will you let go that ultimate thing? It will mean that you will do like Lord Shaftsbury, tear up one by one those darling ambitions of your heart. You will say, I will let them all go, and I will take my cross today and begin to do his will, and that cross will be the place where you will lose yourself and find yourself!

"The Grand Amen"

By Arthur B. Patten

Amen. Matthew 6:13.

THE Lenten season is a time to search the heart and the heavens for deeper life. It is a time both to repent and to resolve, in the spirit of the Lord's prayer. And that spirit culminates in the "Grand Amen" of the human soul. The "Grand Amen" demands two attitudes—So may it be! and So must it be! It demands that we say Amen to God, but also that we say Amen for God. Lent is a time for the humblest devotion, but as well for the most audacious resolution. Both the submission and the insurgency of the Lord's prayer must characterize our Lenten reconditioning. We may pray the Lord's prayer on our knees before God, but we cannot end it with any Amen of "power and glory," until we get on our feet, and stand for God, so that the kingdom may come and his will be done on earth as in heaven.

This is not saying, as someone has put it, that "all the world needs is to cheer up and get on its toes." No man can come out of Lent on his toes who has not been much on his knees. No man can say, So must it be, for God, who has not said, So may it be, to God. But the reverse is equally true. We must come to God in humility, but only that we may rise, through pardon and peace, to power—to "the power and the glory." The Lenten meditation must always lead to the Easter mandate, "Go into all the world with the gospel!" God will never accept our prayer, until we let him actuate our service.

However, in Lent we must realize that resolution is pulseless, without the preparation of the contrite heart. Then, we must learn with Mrs. Browning, to sing,

> And I smiled to think God's greatness
> Flowed around our incompleteness,
> Round our restlessness, his rest.

Adelaide Proctor heard her Grand Amen at the organ, inspired by music.

Lent is a time to company much with the Master, and to learn anew the music of the gospel from him. At the cathedral in Freyburgh, the old organist is improvising at the close of day. A stranger enters, listens, and then asks that he may play. He is told that the instrument is very choice, and must not be entrusted to the hands of strangers. But the stranger answers, "I too am a musician." Then, after much reassurance, the newcomer is allowed just to slip onto the seat beside the old organist. As the stranger plays, the arches ring with such master music as the cathedral has never heard before. The old organist cries, "What—who are you?" "I am Mendelssohn," comes the answer. Then, in humility, the old musician exclaims, "To think that I nearly kept the master from playing on my instrument!" But Mendelssohn had invoked from the organ not only the tenderest notes and the most touching nuances, but also the power and the glory of the trumpets. The Grand Amen demands the full organ. Lenten devotion is incomplete without the diapason. This balance and fulness of life was the power and the glory of the master of masters, Jesus Christ.

Holiness Is Wholeness

The Grand Amen claims of us all the totality of life. It is keyed to the cry of the psalmist, "Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me bless his holy name!" Holiness is wholeness. What Jesus really said was, "Blessed are the whole in heart, for they shall see God." Paul declares, "We are *complete* in Christ." The spirit of Lent, the spirit of the Lord's prayer—the Grand Amen—breaks down all walls of partition, breaks out of all compartments, into the completeness of life. Too many persons turn to prayer mainly as a relief mechanism, a retreat to an inner seclusion; but real prayer ascends to a "large upper room." The first century vision of Patmos, as well as of Pentecost, swept all the expanse of the four-square City of God, and promised to bring the glory and the honor of the nations into it. Yet, did not Jesus tell us to go into our closets, and shut the door? But he was only charging us not to pray to be seen of men; he was not telling us to shut ourselves away in prayer so that we could not see our brothers. When Jesus closeted himself with God in the wilderness, he was open-visioned to all the world. He was seeing his brothers as it were from the pinnacle of a temple, and from a mountain top of both expansive and intensive outlook. When he challenged Nicodemus to personal heart-searching and regeneration, he declared that such a new birth would open his eyes so that he would see the kingdom of God.

Penitence is pathological, unless it is social as well as self-regarding. Even Jesus, who knew no sin, prayed the social prayer of penitence. He repented for the people. So, the Lord's prayer is Christ's prayer, too—all of it. The paternoster of penitence was the vicarious cry of his spirit, identifying itself with the sin and shame of all mankind. And even our prayers, whatever our personal sense of shame and sin, must always be vicarious with sympathy for other sinners, and intercessory for their salvation, as well as individualistic for our own. Prayer is not a diversion just for our personal deliverance and delectation; it is both the penitent passion and compassion of the seeking soul, to whom other souls are as dear as its own. Every really praying son, even in deepest need and penitence, is also a brother. And the test of our own contrition is but this sincerity of our brotherliness in prayer. Jesus declares that we cannot bow at the altar, unless we seek forgiveness from other men, and that we cannot stand at the altar, unless we show forgiveness to all men. Get right with God! But remember that there is no possible rightness with God, without right regard for others. "When you pray, say, *our.*" That is the first word that our Master puts upon our praying lips.

Praying It Through

But Lenten prayer is vastly more than penitence. It sweeps the whole gamut of adoration, confession, supplication, and thanksgiving. Its Grand Amen is the complete rosary of devotion, with every paternoster intact. "Have you prayed it through?" It may take the whole forty days of Lent—but, if you only pray it through to the Grand Amen of your total manhood, for the glory of God on high, and for good will among all men, then the Lenten season will bring you to such a splendor of Easter as you have never yet known.

> Let me keep Lent,
> Let my heart grow in grace,
> Let thy light shine, till my illumined face
> Shall be a testament read by all men;
> Let hate be buried, self crucified, new-born—
> The spirit that shall rise on Easter morn.

Again our thoughts turn reverently and adoringly to Jesus in the wilderness—passionately praying it through, for the integrity of his own messiahship, and for his prophetic leadership of men. It was no "retreat"; it was a rendezvous with life and death. He was "driven" by the spirit of God. But he was preparing his own spiritual "drive" on the world. Later he would say, "Go!" to his disciples; but now he was himself getting the word, Go! from his God. He was apart, but not aloof. He sought the secret place of the Most High, but only in order that he might later make the temple and the marketplace ring with his evangel. Even Christ was tempted to compromise the glory of that first Lenten rendezvous. But he prayed it through victoriously for himself and for us all. He chose the highest of all highways. Was it not there, in the testing and the triumph, that he captured the Lord's prayer for the world? Was it not there, in those preparatory sacramental days, that he reached the power and the glory of the Grand Amen? Was it not there that he repented in love for all of us, and resolved in righteousness for a world's redemption? But it was vicarious love, and not substitutionary righteousness, and we must keep the same sacramental tryst with him. Therein is the only creative meaning of Lent. It is a tryst of love for a quest of righteousness.

What Christ resisted was only the foil for what he resolved. Affirmatively, he would have no bread, except on such terms as others also might have it; he would have no popularity for which he did not pay the final human price; and he would accept no career that would not with it bring peace on earth and good will to all men. He came out of the wilderness to release that righteous love that would cooperate with God and nature to provide bread and brotherhood for every man and child. He came out determined to let popularity wait upon that patient, self-giving ministry, that could stand the test of the cross, and of

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the centuries. He came out pledged to a career without bloodshed, unless it should be the shedding of his own blood in the sacrifice of utterable love. He came out devoted to a conquest that should lead captivity captive, and make him and his disciples "more than conquerors." He came out with the perfection of piety, but he came out also with the gift of prophecy, and with the program of the kingdom of God on earth—with "all authority." His was the piety of power, and his was the power of piety.

And so "Jesus returned in the power of the spirit." Thus Lent is not a "retreat," but a getting ready to return—in the power of God, and of godliness. Even the Shepherd Psalm carries the complete thought: "He restoreth my soul; he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness." Always back of society is the restored soul; but always in society is the soul's final creative career and citizenship. The kingdom of God is the reign of souls in the society of other souls. And on earth, these souls are in human bodies needing daily bread, and human brothers.

"Jesus returned in the power of the spirit"—first, to the church. But he came to build his own church, to God—for man. His first words, after his Lenten rendezvous with God, are sublimely significant. They were uttered in the synagogue of his home town of Nazareth: "The spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach good tidings to the poor; to proclaim release to captives; recovering of sight to the blind; liberty to them that are bruised —to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord." Of course, we may spiritualize this gospel, but we must not dehumanize it. It was meant for spirits in actual bodies, needing food and raiment, and homes, and markets, and hospitals, and farms, and workshops. The high sanctities and sanctions of the Lenten tryst were for homely, but divine, application to these brotherly quests. It was Jesus himself who said, "If ye are not faithful in the ministry of money, who shall commit to your trust the true riches?" He was certainly saying in effect, You must lift the depression from the poor, the hungry, the sick, and from all the bruised and burdened sons of earth. He even put into his immortal prayer the brotherly petition, "Give *us* this day *our* daily bread." There can be no Lenten tryst that is not a travesty, unless, in this day of hunger, we both pray and plan for the people's bread, and the children's milk, and for the total reconstruction of business, politics and society in the spirit of Jesus.

Dreams and Deeds

The prayer for all true Christians, and the preamble for the kingdom of heaven on earth, which Christ brought out of the wilderness, must be written anew not only into human hearts, but into human institutions, in this day of tragedy, but of unapproached opportunity. We are blinded dreamers, without vision, and certainly without visualization, unless we can see, through the penitence and prophecy of a great Lenten experience, some worthy way to operate our machines and handle our merchandise, so as to pass prosperity and brotherhood around. If our Lenten Christianity is not penitential enough, and penetrating enough to conquer poverty, in the midst of all the overflowing plenty of our land, then we are bankrupt both mentally and spiritually. We have been making a wilderness out of the fruitful field, instead of making the desert blossom like the rose. The needy have asked for a square deal, and now we can hardly rise to the wisdom and stamina to give them a mere dole. Are we going to make a valley of dry bones out of our garden of Eden? Shall another Lenten season pass and leave us still mulling and mumbling? Where are the articulate voices of the new seers and saviors? There was once a prescription of prayer and fasting. Now it would seem as if mostly the wrong persons are doing the fasting, and that we all are failing in creative prayer. Let those who still have plenty fast, and let us all pray that God may send us forth in the spirit of wisdom and of sacrifice to meet the need of this hour. There is a scripture that runs,

"As I was musing, the fire burned." Moffatt gives a more revealing rendering, "My thoughts kindled as I prayed." Does not the lack of kindling thought today, on the problem of our depression, indicate our dearth of prayer? If so, then a new revolutionizing Lent cannot come too soon.

But however we pray, and however we think, no ready-made final plans will be issued. No finished blueprints will be let down from any technocratic upper heaven. The design on the divine trestle-board will be traced and learned progressively, experimentally. Wisdom follows the will to do. The Master declares, "He that willeth to do God's will shall know." We may not have a sunburst, but we may —we must—have a sunrise. However, it is only the sun of righteousness that rises with healing in his wings. Now is the time for the Supreme Lenten Amen, for the voice of the morning: So *may* it be— So *must* it be! If men will get together in the spirit of the Lord's prayer, light will dawn, and holiness will indeed whisper the Grand Amen not only of peace, but of wisdom and plenty.

One Family, With God as Father

We have been using God's power recklessly, not doing his will reverently. Plenty of fruits, plenty of goods! Only good will has failed us. Shakespeare makes one of his characters pray, "O, for a muse of fire that would ascend the highest heaven of invention!" We have had plenty of inventions, but wherever they have been conceived, they certainly have not been consecrated in any high heaven. It is consecration of invention that we most need today.

> We men of earth have here the stuff
> Of paradise; we have enough.

Our inventions have been almost divine; but our intentions have not been vastly inspired or godlike. It would become us to go into the Lenten tryst, breathing the words of Paul, "The whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain, awaiting the revealing of the sons of God." Even God waits for us. "I cannot come till my people come." In one of the countries of Europe, during the hunger tragedy, just after the world war, two little starving girls were talking together. One asked pathetically, "Why has God forgotten us?" But the other was wise enough to answer, "God hasn't forgotten us. The people he told to help us have forgotten." What a pitiful Lent we shall have in 1933, if we still forget!

We have seen that the preamble of the kingdom which Jesus brought out of his own Lenten tryst was a proclamation of bread and brotherhood for all men, in one family, with God as Father, and with himself as Elder Brother. He said not only, Take my salvation, but also, Take my yoke, and learn of me in the obedience of heroic service. His Christianity is a way of life. And God pity us if we make it a wizardry of words. The world will never be saved by the technicalities of creeds, but by the technique of godly and goodly deeds—by the "faith that works by love."

Then, some kinds of prayer, even, may be a retreat from real life. Only "godliness, with contentment (for other folks, as well as for ourselves) is great gain."

I would not disparage the drawingroom rendezvous of the Oxford movement, detract from the value of the boudoir Amens of Buchmanism. But they will never satisfy Christ's passion for the total adventure of the kingdom of God.

Not long ago I was deeply impressed by a picture entitled "Religion in Early Times." It was evidently copied from a mural painting in the Congressional library, in Washington, D. C. Two human figures are worshiping before a crude stone altar, on which a fire is burning. One form, deeply bowed in shame, is naked to the waist, with the lower limbs clad in rags. It typifies the penitent and the contrite heart. The other form, clad in purest white, is but slightly bowed, and of a rapt countenance, typifying forgiveness and adoring thankfulness. So far, all is as it should be; but the picture to me is incomplete. I must summon another figure to the altar. I see a third form, standing altogether erect, with loins girt and lamp burning, and crying with Isaiah, "Here am I; send me!" Then, in my thought, the three figures compose into one. So, penitent, thankful, audacious for high deeds, the human soul meets its God at the altar—and the Grand Amen is complete. What a wonderful trilogy of prayer—I am undone, I am thankful, Send me!

> Lord, what a change within us one short hour
> Spent in Thy presence will avail to make!
> What heavy burdens from our bosoms take!
> What parched ground refresh as with a shower!
> We *kneel,* and all around us seems to lower;
> We *rise,* and all the distant, and the near
> Stands forth in sunny outline, brave and clear;
> We *kneel,* how weak! We *rise,* how full of power!

The Meaning of Lent

By Roy L. Minich

Be still, and know. Psalm 46:10.

THE PUBLIC ministry of Jesus probably occupied less than fifty days. He came to a world of great need. He brought a message such as had never been brought before. There was a strange healing in both his words and his hands. Why did he wait so long before beginning his ministry and why did he not crowd full every available moment with some worth while activity? He knew some things that we very much need to learn, namely, that the best knowledge comes from being still and that real strength is the reward of quietness. We rush about too much. In our frantic haste to get a little cup of water to some thirsty soul we never have sufficient time to find the fountain of living water. We rush to sweep up the little scattered crumbs and miss the breaking of the bread with an unseen presence in some upper room. We are nervous and restless when we should be calm. We are creatures of panic when the world is looking to us for poise.

James Truslow Adams has told the story of a friend of his who was on one occasion among the savages of the upper Amazon. He was suddenly called back to civilization. He was returning by forced marches, but on the third morning the native carriers failed to appear at the appointed time. They were found sitting on their haunches, looking solemn and not prepared to move. When asked, the chief gave the following explanation: "They are waiting. They cannot move farther until their souls have caught up with their bodies."

That describes our age all too well. We, too, have traveled far and fast. We have traveled far from old standards of conduct. We have departed from certain fixed principles. We have outworn many machines and left far behind some figures of speech and forms of thought. Some men say that we have traveled farther in the past few years than our fathers did in a century. Regardless of how far we may have gone, and quite aside from whether or not it has been forward and upward, I think there is no Christian person who does not feel that the time to wait and give our souls a chance to catch up with us is long overdue.

The Soil of Quietness

The Lenten season comes again to remind us of the need of meditation and to provide us the opportunity for its practice. The doing of many things can never be an adequate substitute for thought. Religion to the average Protestant believer means abounding in good works. Perhaps our works would more often bear fruit of permanent worth if they were nurtured in the soil of quietness. There is a significant statement in "Re-Thinking Missions": "Christianity, therefore, cannot afford to leave to Buddhism or to Hinduism the art of meditation. It may well be that Buddhism

A Prayer for Lent

By Wilbur P. Thirkield

GRACIOUS God, our heavenly Father, we are in Thy presence. We adore Thee, we worship Thee, we give thanks to Thee; out of glad hearts we sing our praises to Thee. Grant, we beseech Thee, the sense of Thy presence with us. To this end make clean our hearts within us. Grant Thy Holy Spirit unto us, and so reveal Thyself to us in the worship of this hour that all life shall take on a new and diviner meaning, and that we may go forth brave and strong for the work of life.

Reveal Thyself unto us as Thou dost to the pure in heart. Face to face with the vastness of the universe that bewilders and distracts, grant us a deepened sense of the reality of God. Give us a new hold on eternal life; and may we realize that this is life eternal, here and now and evermore, that we may know Thee, the only true God and Jesus Christ whom Thou hast sent. May we be conscious of our own immortality; our deathlessness; that Thou hast set eternity in our heart. May we live as being immortal. Created in Thine own image, may we realize the unmeasured possibilities of growth into Thine own likeness; so may we ever through the faith and knowledge of God be coming to the perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ.

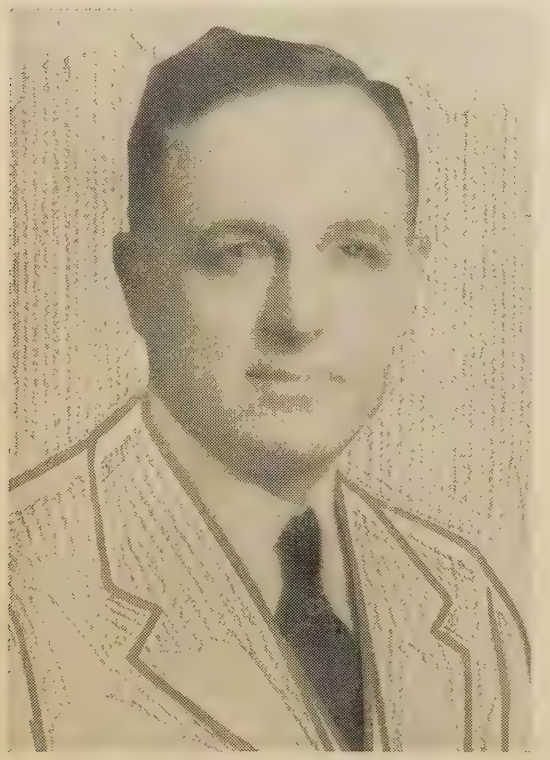
All days are Thine and our faith should not falter or our devotion die; but in this Lenten season, with a fresh vision of the sacrifice of Christ for the sins of the world, may we look into our hearts and see if there be any wicked way in us. Amid the noise and tumult, may we wait in holy silence to hear God speak; may we see ourselves in the light of the Cross; may evil thoughts and sinful imaginations of our hearts be crucified. From deadly sins that war against the soul; from envy, pride, and avarice; from vain ambitions and unholy desires; from love of self, and denial of brotherhood, deliver us, we beseech Thee, O Lord. Give us a passion for purity. May we be so filled with the Spirit that lusts of the flesh shall have no power over us. May we endure hardness as we fight against wickedness in high places. Taking up our cross daily, may we follow Thee, O Christ, with patience and constancy.

As Thou hast revealed Thyself in Christ, so may we more and more enter into His life. May Christ be formed within us, until out of the deeps of a real personal experience we may be able to say: I have the mind of Christ; for me to live is Christ; and the life which I now live even here in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God who loved me and gave himself for me. May the people who this day here worship in Thy sanctuary enter into the glad experience of personal appropriation of Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord.

We thank Thee for the Church of the living God, the pillar and ground of truth, the church grounded in the life and teachings, in the sacrificial death and the glorious resurrection of Jesus Christ. May the holy example of its saints and martyrs, its prophets and teachers, give to us inspiration, guidance, strength and courage. So do Thou bless this Thy people, with Thy servant the pastor, and cause Thy face to shine upon them, granting unto them all spiritual grace and guidance and the sense of Thy constant presence with them.

We commend unto Thee all sorts and conditions of men, the sick, the needy, the poor, the unemployed, and pray that Thou wouldst reveal Thyself to them, through Thy children, in peace, comfort, grace and healing. Hear Thou our prayers. Forgive what we have been; cleanse, renew and sanctify what we are; order what we shall be, and save us now and evermore with the power of an endless life, through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

depends too much on meditation as the way *par excellence* to enlightenment. If so, it is the corresponding error of our Protestant ministry, mission or otherwise, that it depends too much on our activity as the way to retain the meaning of its faith. It is one of the strengths of Christianity that it is disposed to run out into action. It expects to be applied. But it has the defect of its strength. Our ministry grows dull by too great business. It forgets, or its institution forgets, the irreplaceable uses of leisure in the search for a new stage of truth. We would commend to the Christian church a serious inquiry into the religious value of meditation and a study of the ways in which a further place for this function can be brought into the Christian life, without falling into the common abuses of monasticism."



Roy L. Minich

If we are to have any opportunity for that quietness out of which grows both strength and knowledge, there are some things we simply must let go. Our lives are too full. They are full of a multitude of pleasant things, innocent enough in themselves, but harmful in that they rob us of the time and energy for better things. The good has a way of crowding out the best. Lent is a good time to re-think the value of many of our activities. Its emotional lift should strengthen our resolution to put first things first. Lent should put new meaning into the Lord's day. We have got into the habit of making Sunday a sort of convenient waste-basket into which we dump all the scraps of the week's work and pleasure. The things we do upon the Lord's day are not bad in themselves. They are harmful only in that they keep us from or provide the excuse for our not doing the best things.

Not very long ago, during a hospital call, I left a copy of a modern Life of Christ on the table beside the bed so that the patient could look through it at her leisure. Upon the cover was a fine picture of the Christ. Before I left the room another friend entered. She also had a book which she described as a "spicy" novel. She was just in the act of placing it upon my book when she noticed the picture of Jesus. "Oh, I must not do that," she said, and with a somewhat shamed attitude she placed her book beneath the other. A little waiting in silence during this period of Lent will make us rearrange a good deal of life. Some things that have been taking too much of our time will be put down out of sight. Even a hurried, partial vision of Jesus will make men act like that.

Burnt-Out Satisfactions

It is this living in the midst of confusion and hurry which robs life of its power of concentration and constructive thought. When the power to think has gone, there remains nothing except the capacity to feel. When the emotions become sated, new sensations must be found. The object of living becomes a futile search for some new sensation which may still possess the power to arouse our dulled sensibilities. When the list of sensations is exhausted, the purpose of life is lost. A few years ago a very brilliant young man took his own life. In a final letter he gave this reason for his act: "I have run from wife to wife, from house to house, and from country to country in a ridiculous effort to escape from myself. . . . No one thing is responsible for this (suicide) and no one person—except myself. I did it because I am fed up with inventing devices for getting through twenty-four hours a day." The power to be still is like many other God given powers, neglected it is ultimately lost. The satisfaction to be found from sensations finally burns itself out and then nothing is left—except the end.

One of the finest fruits of meditation is repentance. Surely repentance is needed in life. Just as the mourners' bench is no longer a feature of our church architecture, so the call to repentance is no longer a very prominent part of our message. There was a time when Lent stood for repentance; it is now too frequently used simply to increase church attendance or to improve the condition of the church treasury. The church that so uses Lent is not very far removed in spirit from the men who threw dice at the foot of a cross for the spoils of its victim. How can any man or institution stand in the presence of the suffering Son of God and think only in terms of getting something for themselves?

A Sense of Sin Needed

It is a sense of sin we need. I do not know of anything which will produce the spirit of penitence like an awareness that our wrongdoing causes pain, not to ourselves alone, but to another. Not long ago I watched a man weep because of a wrong act of his son. As I sat there I kept wishing his son could see his grief. If he could just have seen his father's face he

would live differently from that day forward—if there was any manhood in him.

Lent shows us a suffering Father. Will you be still long enough before Calvary that you may know something of the pain your wrongdoing has cost and is costing? If you do, you will never treat life flippantly again. Go to the bleak hill and look at the cross with the Man upon it. Do not turn your eyes aside until its grim horror has burned into your soul. Look longer until you sense the exhaustless love it is meant to express. See in that spectacle the hardness of man forcing a great hurt on the heart of the Eternal. See how much your sin hurts God. See the God with courage enough to create you, with patience enough to follow you into every far country of your sin and with love enough to suffer for your salvation. If you can be still at Calvary, and know both the vastness of your sin and the amazing love of the Father, and still continue to live a little selfish life, then there is nothing any man can ever say that can touch your heart.

Power Through Prayer

Robert Louis Stevenson, in his fable "The Touchstone," tells how a certain man found this touchstone and turning its light upon himself, he knelt down to pray. Prayer is the close companion of meditation. When we are still, especially at Calvary, we cannot do other than pray. And prayer does something for us. It makes us different men. It releases new powers within us. It may never remove our difficulties but it gives us strength to meet them. It may not quiet the storm about us, but it does bring a blessed calm within. Without meditation and prayer we are too small for our world and too weak for our tasks. Like those early disciples we are constantly asking, "Why could not we cast it out?" We need to remember the reply of Jesus, "This kind goeth not out save by prayer."

Some summers ago, while browsing about in a country lane near our summer camp, I found in a fence corner, almost hidden by briars, a huge native stone hollowed out for a watering trough and bearing the noble inscription, "My strength cometh from the hills." But there was no water in it. It was filled with dead leaves and rubbish. Upon inquiry I found that there was a well on the hill above and upon examination I discerned that there was plenty of water in it, but that the pipe between the two was rusted and broken. The need was there and the means to supply the need, but some contact had to be provided between the two.

That suggests the place of prayer in experience. There are a good many things in life which we can very well do without, but God is not one of them. Without him life is empty and shallow and filled with rubbish.

I must have God. My life's too dull without,
Too dull for aught but suicide. What's man got
To live for else? I'd murder someone just
To see red blood. I'd drink myself blind drunk
And see red snakes if I could not look up
To see blue skies, and hear God speaking through
The silence of the stars.

A Study in Crosses

By Marcus E. Lindsay

And come, take up the cross and follow me. Mark 10:21.

And take up his cross, and follow me. Matthew 26:24.

And take up his cross daily, and follow me. Luke 9:23.

WILLIAM M. THACKERAY was walking out the Dean road to the west of Edinburgh one evening, when he noticed that the wooden crane of the quarry was standing out, as if etched upon the sky, and so placed as to assume the figure of a cross. Thackeray and his three companions gazed at it silently. "As they gazed Thackeray gave utterance, in a tremulous, gentle, and rapid voice, to what all were feeling, in the word 'Calvary.' His friends walked on in silence, and then turned to other things. All that evening he was very gentle and serious, speaking, as he seldom did, of divine things—of death, of sin, of eternity, of salvation—expressing his simple faith in God and in his Savior." The man of letters, who knew so well the human heart and had analyzed its passions with such skill, was bowing down to the cross.

Yet the cross is an inhuman instrument of bloody torture. It is a gibbet full of horrors. Grim and terrible, it was one of man's most cruel methods of punishment. So we pass beyond the cross in all of its realism to the meaning and the message. It suggested sin, and death, and eternity, and salvation to Thackeray, and so it does to all of us.

I. Take Up "The" Cross

Now the New Testament scriptures universally teach the matter of cross-bearing. There is a general cross which every human soul must bear. Those who are born into this world and come to years of maturity cannot escape the bearing of this cross. It lays its burden upon all. It insists on being borne by all.

In our first scripture study of the morning, we find the incident of the rich young ruler who came to Jesus. Jesus told him that he lacked one thing, he must go and sell all that he had and give to the poor, "and thou shalt have treasure in heaven; and come, take up the cross and follow me."

Now this incident teaches us at least this: that one must choose between sacrifice and selfishness. The word sacrifice is distasteful, especially distasteful to this wanton generation. Sacrifice is never pleasant to contemplate. But sacrifice is after all, whether we will or no, the general cross which every one of us must bear. Think around the gamut of your life, your individual advancement and culture; your family life; your communal life; and you will discover that in every one of these departments, the things which are rich and character forming have come to you along the line of sacrifice, every last one. And those who constantly choose this way of living, live on a high and holy plane. But those who regard life on its lowest

side, who look upon it as little more than a few short years of trial and trouble, with few or no joys—those who contemplate life from that side you will always find are selfish, inordinately selfish. And those who regard life from the high side, from its sacrificial side —you will find that they are living sacrificially.

Said a Christian woman to me the other day: "This is a glorious world in which to live." Yes, but I knew something of her life, and I knew that she thinks and acts from unselfish standpoints—I knew that she was living the sacrificial life. So to each of us comes the alternative: Shall I follow selfishness, or shall I bear the cross of sacrifice? Jesus, we read, "for the joy that was set before him, endured the cross, despising the shame."

II. Take Up "His Cross" and Follow

In our next scripture passage Jesus urges that each take up "his" cross and follow him. Now crosses are not the same. Oh, no, they are never the same. Each of us has an individual cross to bear. There is a general cross and we all have to help bear the general cross. But there are individual crosses and each has an individual cross. Your cross is not the same as my cross. My cross is not the same as your cross. Crosses differ according to the individuals who are crucified upon them. The three crosses on Calvary were all the same, you say. Yes, the same in substance; they were made of wood. They were ponderable. They had weight. They had size and dimension. The crosses of Calvary were all the same. Well, then, if they were really all the same, when Paul talks about the cross which cross does he mean, the cross of the impenitent thief, the cross of the penitent thief, or the cross of Jesus? Ridiculous, you say—why, when Paul talks about the cross he always means the cross of Jesus. Then the crosses are different, and they differ according to the victim who hangs upon them.

On one cross there was the impenitent thief. He was suffering the final outcome of his life of violence and bloodshed. There wickedness had come to its death. He had made his living by violence and now the law was exacting from him an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth. It was an awful exaction—but in a way it was just. So this cross was a penal cross. It takes its meaning and its truth from the victim who hung upon it. It was wickedness come to its final issue which is death, so the cross of the impenitent thief was a penal cross.

On the other cross was the penitent thief. At the very beginning both thieves had been exactly the same and so both crosses had been penal crosses. They were suffering the just recompense of their sins. It was nothing more than they could expect, seeing the sort of violent life which each had led. So both crosses were penal because both victims were suffering for their sins. But notice. As the dreadful agonizing hours dragged their painful moments by, this cross became a reformative cross. The thief becomes penitent—he is moved by the central figure, he is touched by the gentleness and the beauty of that life which hangs next to him. He repents and exclaims: "Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom." At that moment his cross becomes a reformative cross; differing now from the penal cross, because there had come a change in the victim. So the cross of the second thief becomes a reformative cross.

But there was a central cross and that cross differed from the other crosses according to the victim which hung upon it. It was not a penal cross, for even Pilate had said: "This man has done nothing worthy of death." So by the wildest flights of imagination that central cross cannot be called a penal cross. And it was not a reformative cross. When did Jesus ever repent, and for what sin did he need repentance? So his cross could not have been a reformative cross. His cross was a redemptive cross. On that cross the victim was making possible the redemption of mankind. So the cross of Jesus was a redemptive cross; love going forth to forgive, and to cleanse and to save.

Marcus E. Lindsay

So each of us has an individual cross, a peculiar cross of his own. What is yours?

III. Take Up "His Cross Daily"

Our other scripture is from Luke and Luke says it is a daily cross. There is not only a general cross and an individual cross, but there is a daily cross. Because cross-bearing is a grim and serious business, some of us react violently to those hymns that counsel bearing the cross with a smile. Are these three crosses to be borne with a smirking smile? Shall we go lugging the dead weight of three crosses with a frivolous and jaunty air? Preposterous. Cross-bearing is hard, grim, bloody business, that exhausts the force of life and lays the energies low. It means tears, and agony, and

shame, and suffering. Is that something over which we may smile? Is cross-bearing a holiday, a picnic? Most of us do not find it so.

One daily cross is the sin of life. Oh, how easily our sins beset us! Daily we have to wrestle with the devils of pride, and envy, and anger, and bad temper, and how many more devils I know not. And the farther we penetrate into sainthood the more terrific is the struggle that we shall have every day with sin. We can almost measure our spiritual ascension by the increasing vigor of the daily struggle. General Gordon once said that that very morning he had a terrible time hewing Agag to pieces. He meant by that, that he had had a terrible struggle with some sin that had set upon him. Yet as one visits St. Paul's in London he may read this inscription: "Major-General Charles Gordon, C. B., who at all times and everywhere gave his strength to the weak, his substance to the poor, his sympathy to the suffering, his heart to God." That struggling praying man in the Soudan, being crucified on his cross, becomes the final explanation of the glorious inscription in St. Paul's. He became crucified to sin—that he might live to Christ.

"I Die Daily"

Paul said, you remember, "I die daily, nevertheless I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me." Daily, Paul was crucified with Christ, that he might be raised with him.

Sorrow is a daily cross. Those of you who have experienced it know. It is ever with you. It is there daily. If you have not been crucified upon it, then you lay it down at night, only to pick it up again in the morning and drag it along all day.

Dr. Stanley Jones says that in Calcutta he had two beautiful friends, Mr. and Mrs. Lee. "I cannot think of Mr. Lee as dead," he writes. "If there is no heaven, I don't know what the universe will do without him, for he took heaven out with him. My friend, Mr. Lee, had heaven in his face. He had that poise that comes from long walking with God; that insight of spirit which tells that one is unshockable. They had six beautiful children. Those six children were up in the school in Darjeeling, living in a cottage on the hillside, and one terrible stormy night during the monsoon rains the whole hillside slipped away and buried the six children at once. One little boy lived long enough to tell the story of that night; told how the elder sister called the rest of them around her and urged them not to be afraid and as they were kneeling in prayer around her, the hillside slipped away and buried them all. One little fellow lived long enough to tell the story and then he died."

Well, that was a cross, a terrible cross, more terrible than can ever come to any of us—or that can come to one among millions. After this terrible tragedy Mr. and Mrs. Lee talked it over and said: "Our home has been broken up; then we will set up a greater home." They turned their difficulty into a door; yea, they followed their Lord to Calvary and were there crucified with him. They set up a home for waif children abandoned upon the streets of Calcutta. For more than thirty years they cared for three hundred yearly in their beautiful home and were father and mother to the three hundred. Would you like to know the inscription on the monument which was set up in Darjeeling for the six children whose lives were lost? Well here it is: "Thanks be unto God which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ."

Now that is victory. They took up their daily cross and followed the Lord to Calvary and there were crucified. Mr. and Mrs. Lee, for the joy that was set before them, endured the cross of sorrow. They rose superior to it through the strength of Jesus Christ the Savior and Redeemer.

> Pausing a moment ere the day was done
> While yet the earth was scintillant with light,
> I backward glanced. From valley, plain, and height,
> At intervals, where my life path had run
> Rose cross on cross; and nailed upon each one
> Was my dead self. And yet that gruesome sight
> Lent sudden splendor to the falling night,
> Showing the conquests that my soul had won.
> Up to the rising stars I looked and cried:
> "There is no death. For year on year, reborn,
> I wake to larger life, to joy more great.
> So many times have I been crucified,
> So often seen the resurrection morn,
> I go triumphant, though new Calvaries wait.

Take up "the cross," "his cross," "cross daily"—oh, let us take these three crosses and follow Jesus to Calvary, that there we may be crucified with him, and rise into new power and glory!

Somewhere

SOMEWHERE there lies the dust
Of that rough wooden cross which Jesus bore
Up Calvary. And which, in turn, bore Him;
Was crimsoned with His blood. Dark stains were left
Which sunshine could not bleach,
Nor pelting rains erase.
'Twas cast aside in superstitious fear
Because tradition said He lived again;
And so it lay, until the Mother Earth
Received its crumbling dust back to her breast.

* * *

But on that spot do lilies bloom
With richer coloring, sweeter fragrance?

Somewhere there lie the nails
Which Roman soldiers drove through His
Extended palms. How cruel was the pain!
The blows of hammers rested at His word—
"Father, forgive them, for they know
Not what they do." Stout spikes were they,
Forged at the smithy in Jerusalem.
Somewhere they lie, corroding black
With rust of ages.

* * *

Or have they turned to gold
Through alchemy of Deathless Love?

J. S. COCHRANE.

"Little Foxes" of the Pastorate

By Samuel Harkness

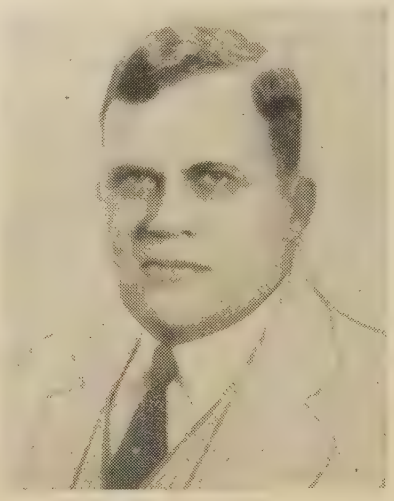
AS cockle-burs are the inevitable souvenirs of a woodland tramp, so stray sentences cling to the mind after many a mental excursion. Here is one covered with prickly implications: "The man who cannot find leisure by the way confesses his inadequacy." The day that barbed accusation fastened upon me had begun with a distracted woman whose husband's health and business had failed together. I had hurried to her home after breakfast because a funeral, involving a drive of seventy-two miles, was scheduled a little later. After that, there was the mail and accumulated telephone calls. Then a dinner meeting where the address was supposed to be bright as well as virtuous. And, to complete the record, a session with the finance committee.

But the blessed hour came when I could light my pipe, stretch out, and reach for a new magazine; it was then the iron entered my soul: "The man who cannot find leisure by the way confesses his inadequacy."

• *A Peripatetic Expert Is Converted*

I have learned to obey Solomon's injunction, "Catch us the foxes, the little foxes, that gnaw at the vines, when the vines are in bloom," by sidestepping as many committee and luncheon meetings as possible. I was once a peripatetic expert, exhorting in Michigan one week as an authority on pastoral evangelism and in Oklahoma the next as an apostle of home missions. I thought it part of my ministry to head a committee for the chamber of commerce, canvass for the Boy Scouts, sing parodies with Rotary, and offer invocations for conventions of Elks, editors, and economists—"chasing goat's feathers," to tie Ellis Parker Butler's satirical tag to this feverish activity. Meanwhile my own folk, who were paying my salary, tightened their spiritual belts when I spread the table of worship with sermonic mist. Fortunately, my sense of obligation cleared before their patience vanished. During those days of barnstorming and banqueting, I would announce a theme in the Saturday papers, trusting to luck and the current magazines.

One Saturday evening, a ministerial friend likewise addicted to chasing goat's feathers, telephoned: "Sam, I notice that you have an unusual topic announced for tomorrow morning. How are you going to treat it?" I said: "What's the matter, Bill, caught short?" He confessed that such was the case. Then I had to admit that I had not yet thought through my sermon outline. This recital is penitential as well as naive, because I elect to be truthful, and have reformed. I now invest ninety per cent of time in my parish. But the indictment still stands; if I find any "leisure by the way," there are new families to be called upon.



Samuel Harkness

Checkmating the little foxes, however, calls for organization of the minister's time and work. Cleland B. McAfee once advised young ministers to lay out a program for the coming year with carefully matured consideration of the spiritual necessity of his particular church in preaching and definite relation of the resources of ability to tasks. Henry Sloane Coffin's lectures on "What to Preach" helped me to see that no man should live, homiletically speaking, from hand to mouth. I spend many hours during my vacation, thinking of the people in my pews and of the kind of preaching they need. Out of these ruminations come certain preaching goals. Then texts and themes and ways of treating them troop in to be recorded and amplified later. This year I came home with a new approach to the every member canvass, partly because I realized that we have used the same technique for a number of years, partly because financial conditions demand a new approach, and partly because I am weary of seeing churches forced to wheedle money out of their members' pockets in much the same fashion as unfortunate wives cajole occasional coins from their reluctant lords and masters. Having worked out the scheme, I chose the men who could successfully put it across. Thus I saved time in November while I was trout-fishing in August.

• *The Tradition of Doorbell Ringing*

But no matter how carefully I plan for the coming fall and winter, I never accomplish the personal contacts determined upon. The late John Kelman of the Fifth Avenue Presbyterian church in New York announced upon his coming to that pulpit that he intended to visit every home in his parish. Those of us who have served in American cities for decades gasped when we read his proud words. Later, he told me that he had found it impossible. It is my conviction that the tradition of ringing every doorbell is the mother of all the little foxes, and that pastoral services must be interpreted in immediate and sufficient contacts with those ill, in trouble, and newly located in the parish.

One of the highest values a minister may render in his community is in the quiet and intimate facing of personal problems. Troubled folk will come to his study and spread before him situations full of pain and anxiety. Then the clock ceases to matter. A man came to me one day last week and said: "Well, I'm at the end of my rope." Fortunately, I was able to splice on some more rope in the form of a temporary job and some money for food and fuel. After we had returned from the city, where the job was secured, and I stood in the doorway of his home, his wife said: "Won't you come in just for a moment and offer a word of prayer?" As I drove away in the dusk, I knew that the day had not been wasted.

• *Storing Up Energy for Preaching*

The minister is in constant danger of being a jack of all trades and master of none. A member of one of my former churches once criticized me for coming into the pulpit so tired that I could not preach effectively. She was entirely right. I was teaching a men's class immediately before the service and lying awake o' nights wondering how I could get hold of sufficient money to finance the church's program. The little foxes gnaw the vines, precluding purple clusters of

distinguished preaching, in the unwillingness of church members to shoulder an appreciable share of the labor and responsibility.

Every minister must be a miser when it comes to saving sufficient time and storing up enough nervous energy for the preparation and delivery of his sermon. There is no excuse for a poor sermon: the pew is portentously silent and the pulpit must follow the adage, "Least said soonest mended." One of my friends puts his portable typewriter and a few books into his car, heads for a secluded spot in the country, and writes his sermon undisturbed. My method is to incubate an idea as I go through the week, putting it upon paper about Friday. Often, it is entirely revamped after the script is written. As I grow older, my preaching is increasingly an attempt to interpret immediate and pressing problems in the light of religious truth. During the last two or three years, I have blown on the cooling embers of courage in men's souls until, at times, it seemed that I had no breath left in me. But that is better than watching them rot through the self-indulgences and disloyalties made possible by too easy money.

• *"Loaf the Day Before the Game"*

A football coach once said to me: "Loaf the day before the game." It is wise counsel for preachers. Whenever possible, I get in eighteen holes of golf on Saturday afternoons, and I would not dine with the Akhoond of Swat on Saturday evening. The little foxes have ceased to gnaw very much at my Saturday afternoon and evening vine; the wire mesh has been too publicly woven. Of course, there are interruptions and interruptions. The perfection of a strategy for the conservation of time and strength for essential things is our answer to multiplied and meaningless distractions. We figure out a schedule which can be achieved if everything goes right, but the drive across town is delayed by a traffic jam, the article promised for a certain date remains half-written because a secretary has the mumps or a director of religious education cannot get the teachers he needs without additional pressure, and the hours slip away while trifles prove not to be trifles. Men in business and professional life never achieve immunity from interruptions. Women find the performance of household duties spaced by the introductory phrases of glib solicitors and tense moments with mischievous children. Even boys are summoned to forgotten errands when the bases are full and it is their time at bat, and girls are invited from delightful pastimes to piano practice. We all recoil from the arrow of interruption that flieth by day and the destruction of plans that wasteth at noonday.

But there are also interruptions which illuminate what we are doing and make it seem trivial, if it is trivial, causing us to tread the path of a wealthier experience. Life has a way of thrusting its dramatic and irresistible demands athwart our precise calculations. No program is so good, even a program of recreation and quiet for Saturday afternoon and evening, that it cannot be set aside, sometimes.

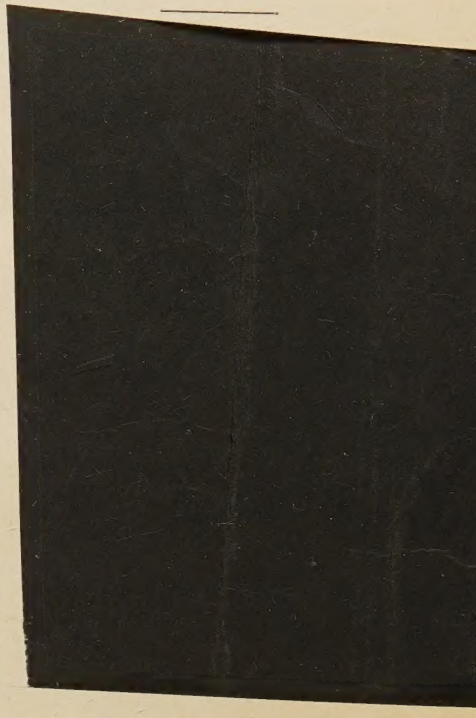
• *Finding Ways of Release*

Jesus' life was a series of interruptions. He was never too preoccupied or hurried or weary to be kind. And he was wise enough to use the human perplexities so urgently and wistfully thrust upon him as means of immediate release and ultimate proof. It is difficult not to be curt over the telephone, and not to be abrupt or evasive with those who seek our aid in the subscription of another fund or by serving upon one more committee. We have the moral right to sift the claims that are made upon us, but we must remember that it is easy to be selfish and to clothe that selfishness with the sophistries of justification. Perhaps we might better serve a foolish cause now and then and waste some time which we will regret than to adopt a policy which may betray us into the mood of the priest and the levite who so unconcernedly passed by on the other side. It is not improbable that someone in Sychar was mending an old chair when the woman called through his open door: "Come, see a man who told me all things that ever I did. Is not this the Christ?" Think of what he missed, if he grumbled, "Nonsense! I promised my wife this chair should be mended today." Unimaginable glory may pass doors marked, "Private," and be rebuffed by placards announcing, "In conference."

• *Harnessing the Little Foxes*

We can actually harness the little foxes. A very kindly person with nothing to do used to drop in to see me. I liked him, but he always came when I was most busy. While he wandered by some conversational brook, I sat miserably thinking of my work. But one day when he came through the door, I said: "You are just the man I am looking for. Go and call upon these families and tell them that we are disturbed because we haven't seen them in church recently." A woman who had no household cares literally showered me with pamphlets. She was an insatiable reader and came frequently to chat about books. Finally, I asked her to re-classify the books in our church library and to sort the music which had been badly mixed up in a fire. Both these people helped me greatly; unconsciously, they were looking for some activity connected with religious work; and when I had the sense and perception to satisfy them, they were happy, and so was I.

After all, life has a right to us. In guarding against the ravages of the little foxes, we must not fortify ourselves against the angels.



On Life's Way

The world is wide,
In time and tide,
And—God is guide;
Then do not hurry.

That man is blest
Who does his best
And leaves the rest,
Then do not worry.

CHARLES F. DEEMS.

NOTE

We have in hand a sermon manuscript received several months ago bearing the title "The Path of the Upper Room." The name of the author is not indicated on the manuscript. Will the author, reading this note, please write the editors, as it is our desire to use the sermon in an early issue.

Also: There have been a number of requests for the Pulpit issue of February, 1930. Will readers who have copies of this number which they do not wish to retain, kindly mail same to this office.

WHO'S WHO in THIS ISSUE

BORN in Melbourne, Australia, Rev. FREDERICK W. NORWOOD lived there for many years; his education was received at Ormond college, in Melbourne. His early pastorates were at Canterbury and Brunswick, Victoria, and at North Adelaide, in South Australia. In 1919 he succeeded Joseph Fort Newton as minister at City Temple, London. But his eloquent voice is no longer a voice of E[illegible] become an interood. Canada and st as well as does His books, "The e Soul," etc., have l is soon to spend any lands.

HOMAS C. DARST Virginian by birth, minary in Virginia 1915 he was rector aul's church, Newhmond. He served sion on Evangelism d in 1926-27 he di-

ood, Rev. HARDING n editorial capacity society, but later ngest term of serv- In 1919 he entered ved B.D. and M.A. period at Yale he nue Congregational completion of his graduate course, he became its full-time minister. In 1926 he was called to his present pastorate, Westfield Congregational church, in Danielson, Conn.

In the year 1907 Rev. E. STANLEY JONES left America as a Methodist missionary—as an evangelist to the high castes of India. He has devoted his life to this field, and has in recent years won wide fame as an interpreter of India to the English-speaking world. Although he has delivered addresses in Great Britain and America, his message has gone out to the wide world most effectively through the medium of his books, "The Christ of the Indian Road," "Christ at the Round Table," and "The Christ of Every Road." In 1928 he was elected bishop of the Methodist Episcopal church, but he decided to return to India to continue his missionary service. He has recently spent many months speaking in China. Dr. Jones' contribution to the Pulpit is a portion of an address given in Nanking to an assembly of Christian workers.

Rev. ARTHUR B. PATTEN *left a Maine* farm to work his way through Colby college and Bangor seminary, and later followed special courses at Harvard. One of his early pastorates was at South Hadley, Mass., the seat of Mt. Holyoke college. On the Pacific coast he held Congregational pastorates at Santa Rosa, Cal., and at Forest Grove, Ore. He was at one time moderator of his conference, in California. Returning east, Dr. Patten served the Center Congregation church in Torrington, Conn. for ten years. His present church, First Congregational, Madison, Conn., is known as "Madison's only church."

Graduating from Union Theological seminary in 1918, Rev. ROY L. MINICH ministered at Christ church, Woodhaven, New York city, from 1919 to 1925. Since 1925 he has been pastor of the First Church in Malden, Mass. (Congregational). For three years he was dean of young people at the Conference of Religious Education at Northfield.

Rev. MARCUS E. LINDSAY *graduated* from Princeton seminary in 1910, and for the following eight years ministered to home mission churches in Idaho. During the world war he served overseas as a Y secretary. Dr. Lindsay has the distinction of serving his second pastorate in the Grace Presbyterian church, Wichita, Kan., first coming to that field ten years ago.

Bishop WILBUR P. THIRKIELD *is chair*man of the Committee on Worship of the Federal Council of Churches.

SAMUEL HARKNESS *is minister of the* Congregational church, Winnetka, Ill.

TITLES AND TEXTS

What Pulpit Readers are Preaching About

CHAUNCEY A. FOREMAN, Community church, Fontana, Cal. "Our Unseen Allies." 2 Kings 6:16—"Fear not: they that be with us are more than they that be with them."

FOR YOUR SERMON TITLE AND TEXT

.....

Title of sermon

.....

Text used (Write out the text)

.....

Name of minister

.....

Name of church

.....

Address

EDWIN L. MILLER, St. Mark's Evangelical Lutheran, Roxbury, Mass. "The Measurement Mania." Zech. 2:1—"A man with a measuring line. . . ."

G. W. HUMMEL, West Broadway Methodist, Louisville, Ky. "Daring the Doubter." John 7:17—"If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God."

WILLIAM L. HORST, Methodist, LaFayette, O. "The Acid Test of Christian Character." Matt. 5:47—"What do ye more than others?"

JOHN D. CLINTON, First Methodist, Fayette, Ia. "Wither-proof Life." Psa. 1:3—". . . by the water of life . . . his leaf . . . shall not wither."

WILLIAM M. ELLIOTT, JR., Fifth Ave. Presbyterian, Knoxville, Tenn. "When Homage is Contemptible." Luke 6:46—"Why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?"

The Editor's Page

The Event of the Month

THE people of the whole United States now, for the first time, are confronted with the question of the legalization of the liquor traffic and the return of the saloon. A solemn referendum is at hand. No such opportunity has ever been given the people of the nation to vote on a naked issue unbeclouded by parties, personalities, or other issues as that which congress has set before us by the passage of the resolution for the repeal of the 18th amendment. It will be a history-making contest. The jubilant wets imagine that it will be an easy victory. They little know what resources the drys will draw upon. The issue as presented by congress is in ideal form. If it had to come it could not come more satisfactorily. No provision is made to prohibit the saloon. The provision for "protecting" dry states is a pure fiction, laying upon the federal government a police burden even more difficult than the enforcement of the 18th amendment itself. It will not be enforced. The method of ratification by state conventions will be corruptly mishandled in many states by wet politics and wet money, but even so it is more likely to yield a truly democratic result than were the issue submitted to state legislatures. The next two or three years will be a period of intensive education on the liquor problem. The struggle will be titanic. The drys have only begun to fight. In church and home and school and club and forum the great debate will proceed. The Christian ministry, whose lines have held firm against the seductions and the browbeatings of wet interests in recent years, will now lead the fight. Not one state must be conceded. The spirit of defeatism must be exorcised. The American people do not want the saloon. They banished it once for all. It shall not come back!

A Call to Battle!

The Book of the Month

THE CURE OF SOULS, *by Charles T. Holman. The University of Chicago Press,* $2.50.

I MAY as well confess that I have an uncanny and an uneasy feeling about the modern invasion of religion by psychiatry. Several books in this field have recently come to my attention whose purpose was to make the pastor feel that he must deal with the souls of men as the psychiatrist or the psychologist deals with them. My instinct is to recoil at such efforts. The pastor's approach to souls that are sick should not be, as I see it, on the level of technical science, but on the level of friendship and sympathy and practical wisdom. But there is one book that I can praise unqualifiedly. Written by a man who has a pastor's heart, a long and rich pastoral experience, a mind informed with both practical and theoretical knowledge of human nature, and a level head, it is a veritable gold mine of pastoral wisdom. Dr. Holman is now a professor in the divinity school of the University of Chicago and this book is the precipitate of his years of experience, study and instruction in the incomparably fine art of ministering to souls that have lost their adjustment with life.

A Thought for the Month

WHAT an error it is to think of God's communications to us as limited to certain authoritative revelations delivered long ago and carried down to us by the record then made! These revelations were true and upon them the hinges of history have no doubt turned. They mark decisive points in the spiritual experience of the race. But the God who spoke to the fathers by prophet and apostle, and supremely by his Son, still speaks to us in many ways. He did not speak to us through them in order that he might avoid the necessity of speaking further. Quite the contrary. All his revelations have been made in order that yet fuller revelations might be made. The reason God speaks to us at all is that he might have yet more speech with us. The idea of a God who holds himself aloof and speaks to men only through selected messengers or written words is not a Christian idea. It is not irreverent to say that God's supreme purpose in his dealings with man is to establish easy, constant and intimate communication with the human soul. Our God is a speaking God, a visiting God, who forever stands at the door of our hearts and knocks, desiring to come in and abide with us. We are not shut up to a knowledge of him gained at second-hand from others to whom he deigned to speak once for all. He would speak to us also. In an infinite variety of ways his voice comes to us. The very winds are his messengers and flames of fire his ministers—that is to say, these are the language that he uses for his speech with men. The silence is sometimes his voice, but he also speaks in an illness, or a defeat, or a success, or a friendship, or a book, or any unexpected event, or by the life of a little child. The changing seasons, the starry heavens, all the processes of nature and the unfolding events of history—these are the language of God to him who will open his heart to understand. God's word is a living word, not a phonographic record. If we will but stop and listen we can catch the accent of the Holy Ghost in any experience which comes to us.

God's Living Voice

Charles Clayton Morrison

IN THE EASTER (APRIL) PULPIT

SERMONS

FREDERICK F. SHANNON, Central Church, Chicago
"The Eternal Easter"

CLARENCE E. MACARTNEY, First Presbyterian Church, Pittsburgh.
"Be Not Faithless, But Believing"

CHARLES F. WISHART, President College of Wooster
"Facing the Sea"

GEORGE LAWRENCE PARKER, First Unitarian Church, Toledo, O.
"Man's Second Chance"

ROBERT MERRILL BARTLETT, First Church of Christ, Longmeadow, Mass.
"First, the Kingdom!"

—and others

PREACHER PROBLEMS ARTICLE

TERTIUS VAN DYKE, Congregational Church, Washington, Conn.
"Shall We Stop Preaching?"

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